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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to determine how much parents were involved in Western Australian secondary schools and how satisfied they were with their involvement. Subjects included almost 2,000 families with children in one of sixteen secondary schools that were a sample of schools of differing sizes, in several types of communities in both rural and metropolitan locations. Subjects completed questionnaires brought home from school by children. Results indicated that scarcely any parents believed there was too much parent involvement in secondary schools. Only a small minority were seeking greater influence over school decision-making. Less than a quarter reported attending a parents' or citizens' meeting in 1977. More than 70 percent of parents said they were satisfied with the way the school kept them informed. Few parents wanted more use of school facilities. Although half the parents were willing to help at school, only a quarter had done so. Two schools in less affluent neighborhoods had low parental involvement, and parents in these districts wanted more involvement. The two schools with the most parental involvement were an affluent metropolitan high school and a school in a large country town. There was no evidence parental involvement varied with school size. (Author/JM)

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Discussion Paper No. 3

A SURVEY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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RESEARCH BRANCH
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

May, 1978

EA 011 088

FOREWORD

This report addresses the issue of parental involvement in secondary schools. While difficulties might be anticipated in involving parents adequately in large high schools, the survey reported in this document found that parents generally were satisfied with the nature and extent of involvement. However, it did identify specific areas of concern which schools might investigate further.

The report is intended to provoke discussion rather than to answer conclusively the complex questions in this area. I encourage schools, in the light of the survey's findings, to enquire about the views of members of their local communities. The interpretations of data are those of the research team, and do not necessarily reflect Departmental policy.

The survey of parental involvement in secondary schools was initiated by a sub-committee of the Secondary Advisory Committee, comprising Mr M. Anderson (R/Superintendent of Education) and Mr F. Harding (Principal, Busselton Senior High School). The study was supervised by Mr M. Angus (Superintendent of Research) and was undertaken by Mr M. Williams of Research Branch, who also prepared this report. Assistance from Mrs D. Watkins of Research Branch in the analysis of parent comments is acknowledged. Thanks are also extended for the help provided by the principals and staffs of the 16 schools which participated in the survey.

D. Mossenson

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The report represents the findings of a study carried out by the Research Branch for the Secondary Advisory Committee in November 1977.

1.2 Community involvement in schools, and specifically, the nature and extent of parental involvement, was a topic considered by the Secondary Advisory Committee. The study provided information that assisted the Secondary Advisory Committee in their deliberations. Preliminary findings were reported in the supplement to the February, 1978, Education Circular.

1.3 The views of almost two thousand families concerning their relationships with secondary schools are considered in this report. While trends are evident in the responses of parents, the interpretation of these trends is sometimes speculative. The report is intended to provoke discussion and review of practices related to the involvement of parents in schools.

1.4 Some caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions that apply generally. After all, a sample of secondary schools only was surveyed, and not all parents responded. Furthermore, as the survey has indicated, schools differ in their overall relationships with parents. Nevertheless, the opinions expressed by parents appear to have direct implications in some areas, and lead to a number of questions which school staff could consider.

1.5 The main conclusions of the study include the following:

- Scarcely any parents believe there is presently too much involvement in secondary schools.
- Only a small minority of parents are seeking greater influence over school policies and administration.
- Almost three quarters of parents state that they do not know whether important matters are discussed at Parents and Citizens' meetings. Less than a quarter report attending such a meeting during 1977.
- Parents appear to be concerned chiefly, if not exclusively, with the welfare of their own children. Although room for improvement is indicated, more than 70 per cent of parents say they are satisfied with the way the school has kept them informed.
- There is only limited demand from parents for the use of school facilities beyond the present level.

- Almost half of the parents express willingness to help around the school (e.g. in the library, coaching sports) but little more than a quarter report that they actually have done so.

- Two schools in less affluent metropolitan districts had relatively low parental involvement, but parents in these schools wanted more invitations and more information from the schools.

- The two schools with the highest incidence of parental involvement were a metropolitan high school serving a particularly affluent area and a school in a large country town.

- There is no evidence that parental involvement varies according to school size. If further investigation is to be undertaken, the impact of the school's socio-economic environment on parental involvement seems to merit close examination. Other factors may include the age of the school and the school's organization.

1.6 The report presents the views of parents only. Teachers might find it helpful to reflect on their own opinions and practices in the light of the parents' views. Schools in the sample have already received their own results, which may prove useful in planning for 1978.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

2.1 In October, 1977, the Research Branch was asked by the Secondary Advisory Committee to undertake a study of the relationship between parents and secondary schools. The study was to be exploratory, culminating in the presentation of findings which might inform the Committee's deliberations. In particular, it sought to answer three main questions.

- To what extent are parents involved in secondary schools?
- How satisfied are parents with the existing pattern of involvement?
- What changes in the forms or extent of parent involvement might be suggested from parents' responses?

3.0 METHODS OF ENQUIRY

3.1 RATIONALE FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A questionnaire survey of parents was appropriate in this study, given the requirements of the Secondary Advisory Committee. Compared with other techniques for data collection, the questionnaire survey had the following advantages:

- *Coverage.* A large number of families could express their views.
- *Economy.* Parents in all parts of the State could be reached economically.
- *Objectivity.* The use of standard questions increased the credibility of comparisons between different schools and the possibility of obtaining an overall view of parent involvement.
- *Rapid analysis.* Results would be available readily since the analysis of fixed response questions was a straightforward procedure.
- *Ease of reporting.* The structure of the questionnaire enabled findings to be reported to the Committee and to the schools with little delay.

3.2 FEATURES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire, which is appended to this report, had these features:

- It was *brief*, containing 21 questions in all.
- Responses required *little writing*, although parents were invited to add comments.
- The language was *uncomplicated*, because the questionnaire was designed for a large cross-section of parents.
- *Direct computerization of responses* was possible, reducing delays in the presentation of results.
- Two types of questions were asked. Parents were invited to indicate *what actually occurred and what should occur.*

Seven main areas of parental involvement were identified, each having different functions and requiring different commitments from parents and schools. These areas were

Contact with staff concerning own child (Questions 1a,1b,4a,4b)

Receipt of information from the school (Questions 6a,6b,10)

Contributions to the school's operation (Questions 3a,3b,7a,7b)

Contact with Parents and Citizens' groups (Questions 2a,2b)

Influence on expenditure (Questions 9a,9b)

Influence on school practices (Questions 8a,8b,11)

Use of school facilities (Questions 5a,5b)

Question 12 enquired about the general attitude of parents towards involvement with the school. The discussion in Chapter Four is organized around the above areas.

3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Sixteen secondary schools were chosen for the study on the basis of three criteria: school size, type of community, and location. It was anticipated that these criteria might be associated with systematic differences in the levels of parental involvement. For example, parents might have less opportunity to become involved in some aspects of a big school than a small school. Parents in working-class areas may have less leisure time to give to helping around the school than parents in middle class areas. Schools in new areas may be more active in enlisting parent support than those in established communities.

The schools selected were

- *Five metropolitan senior high schools*, each serving a different sort of community, but all much the same size.
- *One metropolitan high school*, smaller than senior high schools and located in a new suburban area.
- *Five rural senior high schools*, smaller than city senior high schools, situated in a variety of larger country centres.
- *Five district high schools*, with small student enrolments, located in minor rural communities.

One in every three families of students at the 16 schools was to be included in the sample. It was considered that a sample of this size would be large enough to make the results for individual schools useful to staff.

Schools were to be asked to select one in three students at random from their year or class lists. These students would then take questionnaires home to their parents and return the completed questionnaires to the school.

Year 12 students were not included in the sample because they had left school by the time the survey was carried out.

3.4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The principals and staff of schools chosen in the sample kindly agreed to co-operate with the Research Branch, despite the pressures that exist at the end of the school year. Each principal received a set of instructions for the distribution of the questionnaire. These instructions were contained in a letter from the Assistant Director-General (Schools and Services).

"A representative sample of parents should be selected by the following procedures:

1. One in three students in the school should be selected by systematically nominating every third student on the school roll, year lists, or class lists.

2. Where brothers or sisters are nominated only one child in the family should be included in the sample. The choice of the brothers or sisters eliminated from the sample should be made on a random basis.

3. Students in the sample should be issued with a questionnaire and envelope (possibly during form period). They should write the name of their parent on the envelope.

4. Schools should adopt their own procedures for issuing reminders to students after the elapse of a reasonable period of time.

A covering letter to explain the purposes of the survey should accompany each questionnaire. A draft which you might adapt for your own school is attached to this letter."

Staff distributed the questionnaires to students and were good enough to follow-up late returns. Schools returned their completed questionnaires to the Research Branch.

3.5 RESPONSE RATE

The overall rate of return was 70.5 per cent, varying from 16 per cent at a small district high school to 91 per cent at a large metropolitan high school. It is possible that those returning questionnaires were more involved or interested in the school than parents who did not complete questionnaires, though it cannot be proven. The effect of this on the results presented in this report might be considered.

3.6 ANALYSIS

Fixed response questions were coded and entered directly onto computer tapes. Frequency counts were made for each question, and responses to questions were cross-tabulated. Overall results and results for individual schools were computed. Differences between schools and between parents of Year 11 and lower school students were analysed. Written comments were examined and where possible have been used to illustrate or extend the responses to questions.

3.7 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS TO SCHOOLS

Schools that participated in the study were sent their own results, as well as overall results, in late 1977. Principals were encouraged by the Assistant Director-General (Schools and Services) to use the results in planning for 1978.

4.0 OVERALL RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents aggregated results for all schools in the sample. Differences between schools are considered in the next chapter. Responses to questions are presented under the following headings, which are derived from the major areas of parental involvement identified in the questionnaire.

- Contact with staff concerning own child.
- Receipt of information from the school.
- Contributions to the school's operation.
- Influence on expenditure.
- Influence on school practices.
- Contact with Parents and Citizens' groups.
- Use of school facilities.
- General attitude towards parental involvement.

The first two areas relate chiefly to the involvement of parents in the education of their own children. The third area concerns helping the whole school, although such involvement may indirectly assist in the education of a parent's own child. It seems that the fourth, fifth, and sixth areas entail a different form of involvement again. A part in decision-making is a feature of such involvement. The seventh area may comprise no more than the use of school facilities for private purposes unrelated to the education of children attending the school. Each is a form of parental involvement in secondary schools which warrants separate attention.

4.2 CONTACT WITH STAFF CONCERNING OWN CHILD

The four questions discussed here focus on contact between parents and staff, including contact by letter or telephone. It is assumed that the purpose of such contact is to communicate about children's school progress.

Comments from parents indicate that, for many, the major motivation for maintaining contact with the school is to find out about their child's progress. While this may appear to be an obvious finding, it is one which is easily overlooked in discussions of parental involvement.

Question 1a asks

Have you been invited to meet a staff member in order to talk about your child's progress?

Responses were almost evenly divided

YES	54%
NO	46%

Although almost half the parents report that they have not been invited to meet a staff member to talk about their child's progress, there are a number of factors which need to be considered before deciding whether this is a satisfactory state of affairs. First, there are possibilities that parents interpret the question differently. For example, some may have assumed that the question referred only to personal invitations, not to circulars or student conveyed messages. Others, too, may not have included group meetings, such as parents' nights and open nights.

Schools might consider whether all parents ought to receive invitations to discuss their children's progress with staff. Indeed, schools may already provide such opportunities, but for various reasons the invitations may not be getting home to parents. It may be useful for schools to review their methods of inviting parents to the school.

Question 1b stems directly from 1a, but it omits reference to "invitation". It asks

Do you have enough meetings with staff members to talk about your child's progress?

Responses were

YES	35%
NO	48%
?	17%

Nearly half the parents claim they do not have enough meetings, indicating that parents perceive a need in this area. Unfortunately, the responses above cannot point to the types of meetings that this group of parents want. However, many parents added written suggestions about meetings with staff.

Very strong support exists for the principle that teachers should contact parents if something is wrong with a child's school progress. Many comments suggested that parents are satisfied with infrequent though regular meetings, supplemented by contact from staff if something unusual occurs.

Some parents consider there are circumstances when extra meetings are necessary. These are prior to a child's conclusion of schooling and when new or school-based courses are to be introduced.

Parents claim that teachers sometimes do not know which student they are talking about in meetings, and that parents' nights tend to be ineffective. Parents' nights are criticised because of crowding, which results in long periods of waiting. A number of parents described such meetings as "farces". Some also suggest that parents' nights should be held early in the year, perhaps even before school begins.

It is noteworthy that parents who have been invited to meet staff tend to agree there are enough meetings, while those not invited are more likely to indicate that there are insufficient meetings. The cross tabulation below illustrates that half the parents who have been invited to a meeting also feel they have sufficient meetings. By contrast, less than a fifth of the parents not invited to a meeting feel they have enough meetings.

Q 1b (Enough meetings?)

Q 1a (Invited to a meeting?)	YES	NO	?	
YES	51%	34%	15%	100%
NO	16%	65%	19%	100%

Question 4a investigates the extent to which parents have initiated contact with staff. It asks

Have you contacted a staff member in order to give information that would be helpful in teaching your child?

Responses to 4a were

YES	28%
NO	72%

Assuming that parents know much about their children that would assist the school in its tasks, it might seem surprising that there is such a low rate of parent-initiated contact.

Parents suggest some factors that account for their apparent reticence in approaching staff.

- The school encourages parents to make contact, but there is no need because their children are not experiencing any problems.

- Some teachers do not seem to welcome parents. Two comments from parents were

  "Certain teachers react as though a parent is interfering with their job."

  "Teachers seem to prefer to use their own judgement."

- Domestic, health or social problems should be brought to a teacher's attention, but otherwise it is up to the school to contact the parent.

- Mutually convenient times for contact are not always easy to arrange.

Responses to Question 4b indicate that most parents do not believe the school discourages them from making contact. It asks

Do staff members like you to contact them to give them information that could be helpful in teaching your child?

Responses were

YES	34%
NO	15%
?	51%

The responses suggest that about half the parents do not know the staff's attitude to parent initiated contact. It may be that many parents have never considered getting in touch with school staff. One reason might be the existence of strong informal pressures against such involvement in some communities.

Cross tabulation of responses to questions 4a and 4b suggests that those who have made contact tend to find staff appreciative, while the majority of those who have not made contact are unaware of the staff's attitudes.

Q 4a (Contacted a staff member?)	Q 4b (Do staff members like to be contacted?) YES	NO	?	
YES	64%	7%	29%	100%
NO	23%	17%	60%	100%

The greatest bars to parent contact may be the unfamiliarity of the school and lack of confidence in talking to teachers. Under these circumstances, parents may be inclined to hold back rather than make contact. If this is so, then it would seem to be in the staff's interests, and in the interests of good education, to actively encourage parents to make contact. Many schools do this impressively, but there always seem to be a significant minority of parents who do not respond. Innovative approaches to this problem may be helpful. For example, some schools have teachers with special responsibilities for parent liaison, and others organize class coffee nights and social evenings to reduce the formality of contacts between parents and teachers.

4.3 RECEIPT OF INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL

For most educators and parents it would seem axiomatic that schools ought to let parents know what happens to their children while in the care of the school. Parents need to know about the subjects being studied by their children if they are to give useful advice and support. Information about other aspects of the school is also likely to be valuable. Questions 6a, 6b and 10 address the issue of receipt of information by parents from the school.

Question 6a asks

Have you received information from the school explaining some aspect of a subject being studied by your child?

Responses were

YES	37%
NO	63%

Almost two-thirds of parents report that they have not received such information from the school. Responses of parents of upper and lower school students vary by only two per cent, with upper school parents being slightly better informed.

Parents comment that information is received in a variety of forms, including newsletters, circulars, and orally at meetings. A number refer to the part played by the guidance officer in disseminating information.

Question 6b asks

Do you want to know more about the subjects being studied by your child?

Responses were

YES	74%
NO	16%
?	10%

Almost three quarters of the parents state that they want to know more about the subjects being studied by their children. A major need has been identified here, but schools will not find it easy to meet that need since much depends on the willingness of parents to learn about their children's school life. A satisfied parent has said,

> "I'm a full bottle. I read my children's essays, browse through their textbooks and do my best to communicate with them regarding their friends, beliefs, problems and schoolwork."

This suggests that efforts must be made by parents as well as the school.

Some parents who want more information from the school about subjects have made constructive comments. Among these are

"It would be useful to be advised of the teaching plan for core subjects at the start of each term and of the child's progress relative to it."

"Communication with parents about specific learning difficulties can lead to more effective parent involvement and participation."

"I would prefer information by post. Students often lose notes sent home from school."

"I would have liked to see the year's programme in each subject before the year begins."

"I do feel that a class for parents to attend in regard to modern-day methods would greatly benefit students, parents, and teachers."

"I would prefer more literature sent home explaining subjects instead of asking us to attend meetings."

Clearly, schools cannot satisfy all parents. For example, some parents will not be prepared to attend meetings and others will not understand or will overlook written material. Despite these difficulties, schools might consider whether parents of their students are receiving adequate information. A survey of parents carried out by the school might be helpful in this respect.

Question 10 is more general than questions 6a and 6b, which refer to only a small part of parents' information needs. It asks

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the school has kept you informed about important matters?

Responses were

SATISFIED	71%
DISSATISFIED	14%
NOT CERTAIN	15%

Parents' responses to this question are much more favourable than to question 6b. Five out of seven parents are satisfied with the information coming from the school. However, this is a global judgement, which many parents qualify by nominating specific areas of dissatisfaction.

The main source of dissatisfaction is that parents hear about children's progress only at report times:

"Often, remarks about a student's lack of progress is left to school reports. Parents should be notified earlier in order to rectify the matter."

"We appreciate the reports on mathematics levels between semester reports. Other subjects might follow this example."

"We find we are kept well informed with regard to the activities and happenings of the school, but we know very little of the education of the child. This child is agreed by all to be intelligent, but doesn't produce the standard he is capable of, but none of his teachers have contacted us and both our attempts have not been followed up."

Infrequent complaints include

"Notices and circulars are sent out frequently, but the 'delivery agents' (students) leave a lot to be desired";

"Careers should be discussed with parents as well as students"; and

"Indications of teacher expectations about work standards setting out desired approaches etc. would be helpful."

Parents find many reasons for praising the school's attempts to inform them. Newsletters and school papers are mentioned frequently in glowing terms. Some parents are particularly enthusiastic about class newsletters, which seem more personal than school papers. It seems that parents recognize how difficult it can be for schools to keep them adequately informed.

4.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCHOOL'S OPERATION

Questions 3a and 3b refer to parents helping around the school generally, while questions 7a and 7b refer more specifically to assistance with the school's programme. Both are concerned with the extent of parent involvement in auxiliary activities.

Question 3a asks

Have you helped around the school in some way (e.g. in the library, canteen, "busy bee", coaching sport, etc.)?

Responses were

YES	28%
NO	72%

When these responses are taken in conjunction with responses to questions 10 and 11, parents who help around the school claim to be satisfied with their information about the school and with their influence slightly more than parents who do not help. However, the difference is marginal, which casts doubt upon the suggestion that parents who help at the school will be better informed and more influential than others. On the other hand, it is possible that these parents become less easy to satisfy than others, that is, that their expectations are raised through involvement in the school.

The responses leave many questions unanswered. It is not known whether the majority of helpers are mothers, though this may be surmised. Nor is it known whether the schools in this survey solicited or encouraged help. It is likely, too, that 28 per cent is an overestimate of the proportion of regular helpers.

Some clarification of reasons parents might or might not help occurred in response to question 3b.

Question 3b asks

Would you be prepared to give help of this kind?

Responses were

YES	48%
NO	32%
?	20%

Less than a third of parents signify an inability or unwillingness to provide auxiliary services for the school. If parents are prepared to match their words with deeds, then it seems that schools have a pool of potential helpers who, for various reasons, are not involved at present.

Some parents who are not prepared to help have given explanations. A common one is that both parents work, and therefore do not have time for active school involvement. Other parents say that they are active in youth organizations and sporting clubs, and that this is sufficient. A few parents feel strongly that the Education Department should pay for all help required, rather than relying on the goodwill of parents. As one says,

> "We both work and our spare time, such as it is, is entirely given to our children. If you need help, get the Government to pay for more staff."

There are also parents who have helped in the past, or who have offered to help, but who have been disappointed. Among their comments are

> "I once offered to help in the library, at the private request of library staff, but the former principal considered parents unsuitable."
>
> "I have stopped helping at the canteen after several unpleasant experiences - rudeness, lack of control of students, lack of canteen organization. It falls on the more responsible mothers to provide a service mainly for the children of mothers who never appear on these rosters."
>
> "Through Rotary, I offered to take groups of senior students through manufacturing works such as my company's. The offer was not taken up."

Question 7 is more specific, as it attempts to gauge involvement in classroom-based activities.

Question 7a asks

Have you helped to supervise a group of students, helped a teacher with a lesson, or demonstrated some activity to students in the school?

Parents responded

YES	4%
NO	96%

The low "yes" response may be due to a number of factors. Parents have helped to identify some of these through their comments.

Perhaps the main factor is that precedents for this form of involvement do not exist in most of the schools surveyed. Many parents indicate that "it is not done". Those who might be inclined to help in this way express a reluctance to approach the school first.

Additional factors include the lack of free time during the day, resentment by children of their parents' involvement, lack of necessary skills on the part of parents, and unwillingness of teachers to actively involve parents in classroom activities.

Responses to question 7b suggest a greater acceptance in principle than in practice of parental assistance with the school's programme.

Question 7b asks

Do you think that parents and other members of the community should give more assistance of this kind to teachers?

Parents responded

YES	43%
NO	33%
?	24%

Comparing responses to questions 7a and 7b may not be very informative. Although 43 per cent of parents believe in greater involvement of this sort in principle, this is no indication that such a large group would actually want to be involved themselves. It is possible, as some parents' comments suggest, that many who agree in principle would be unable or unwilling to be personally involved in the school's learning programme.

Nevertheless, it seems that there are considerably more parents than are presently involved who could be keen to assist teachers in classroom learning. Some have mentioned areas of expertise, in academic subjects and practical trades, which they would be willing to share. Others have stated that they are prepared to supervise students.

The size of the "no" response is significant. Some parents have expressed strong opposition to increased involvement in the classroom on a number of grounds.

Most common among these is the view that the Government should provide enough trained teachers. Some parents are quite vehement that teaching is a professional task which cannot be entrusted to any extent to untrained persons.

> "I think teachers would be much better in charge of their own groups, knowing exactly what is going on without outside interference."
>
> "Teachers should be competent enough to handle the classes they teach. Parents should confine their activities to moral issues."
>
> "Staff are professionals, parents are not. I don't appreciate being advised by amateurs in the field in which I practise."

"Parents have a tremendous task bringing up their children properly. Teachers are trained and paid to teach the three 'Rs', and shouldn't expect parents to do it for them. I work in an office and wouldn't expect anyone to come and help me do my job."

Other parents say that teachers are unwilling to accept this form of involvement. Some claim that teachers would not allow them to help in the classroom because teachers would view it as interference.

Some parents express suspicion about the motives of those who would help. These parents state that they would not like to have other parents supervising or directing their children.

Significantly, many parents qualify their "yes" or "no" responses by adding that it is up to the school to decide if help is needed. If it is, they say, then the school should ask parents to volunteer.

Schools would appear to be justified in adopting a cautious approach to this issue. The division of opinion between parents who want professionals only to teach their children and parents who see benefits in the involvement of community people indicates that prudence is warranted in the use of outside help.

4.5 INFLUENCE ON EXPENDITURE

Questions 9a and 9b focus on school finance, thought by some to be a criticial issue. However, the responses suggest that influence on expenditure interests only a small minority of parents.

Question 9a asks

Have you made a suggestion to the school on how it should spend some of its funds?

Few parents report doing so.

Responses were

YES	3%
NO	97%

The small group of parents who might have influence over the expenditure of funds tend to be associated with Parents and Citizens' Associations. Seventy-one per cent of this group report attending a Parents and Citizens' meeting, in contrast to 21 per cent overall.

Parents do not indicate mechanisms other than the Parents and Citizens' Association for bringing their suggestions to the staff's attention. There is no indication that all suggestions result in action, either, so the actual influence of parents over expenditure is likely to be quite insignificant.

Question 9b asks

Would you like to have more say about the way the school spends its funds?

A strong negative response was given.

YES	16%
NO	64%
?	20%

Almost half of those who responded "yes" to question 9a want more influence, while only 14 per cent of those who have not been involved want a greater say. It seems that parents who are already involved in some aspects of school management are more likely to seek increased influence than those who are not involved at present.

Responses to questions 9a and 9b imply that greater involvement of parents in the management of school funds is doubtful. If schools are to invite fuller participation from parents in this area, it is possible that they will attract only a small, and perhaps exclusive, band of parents who might already be deeply involved in school affairs.

4.6 INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL PRACTICES

Questions 8a and 8b indirectly gauge the actual and desired influence of parents on school practices. Question 11 is more direct in asking about satisfaction with the notice that staff take of parents' views. The questions are significant because some educationists believe parental involvement must include opportunities for parents to contribute to policy formation and implementation.

Question 8a asks

Have you made a suggestion to members of the school staff on how to improve some aspect of the school?

Parents responded

YES	7%
NO	93%

While the pattern of responses is consistent with the reported low rate of initiation of contacts by parents, some factors may have masked the actual extent to which parents made suggestions. For example, it is unclear whether complaints are included as suggestions. Furthermore, it is possible that parents have counted only written suggestions and have ignored less formal approaches. Some parents may have assumed that "the school" referred to the buildings and site, not to the institution's organization and practices.

Parents' comments in the questionnaire provide some explanations for the limited extent to which parents suggest improvements to school staff. First, many parents are satisfied with their schools. They believe that staff are doing an excellent job educating students. Some of these parents add that they would contact the staff if they were dissatisfied.

A second explanation, which overlaps the first to some degree, is that staff are professionals who know, or should know, how to organize and maintain an effective school*. Some parents compare teaching with other professional activity, asserting that professionals should not be subjected to interference from amateurs. Clearly, this is a position not all citizens accept.

Third, a few parents consider that staff would not like them to suggest improvements. They indicate that some staff discourage this form of parental involvement.

Yet another factor may be the absence of a clearly defined channel or mechanism for passing parents' suggestions on to staff. A few parents consider that the Parents and Citizens' Association might constitute such a channel, while a small number identify a need for school councils or similar bodies with more extensive powers. However, many appear unaware of the existence of procedures for suggesting improvements to staff.

Despite the fact that few parents actually suggest improvements, the right to do so is endorsed strongly by respondents to the questionnaire.

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* However, many who expressed this point of view made extensive suggestions about the school in the questionnaire.

Question 8b asks

Do you think parents should contact the school if they have an idea on how the school could be better run or their child better taught?

Responses were

YES	63%
NO	22%
?	15%

The following explanations may be tentatively proposed to account for the differences between "yes" responses to questions 8a and 8b:

- People tend to agree that freedoms should exist for others, although the need to exercise them may seldom arise.
- Structures or mechanisms may not exist at present to enable parents to directly influence the school's operation.
- Parents may be generally satisfied with their schools, and may not perceive a need to suggest improvements.

Schools might review the opportunities parents have to make their views about the school known to staff, since parents appear to support the view that legitimate complaints and suggestions for improvement should be passed on to staff. However, many schools may already provide parents with a recognized way of influencing practices, at least where their own children are concerned.

Question 11 asks

Overall, how satisfied are you with the notice that school staff take of your views about school matters?

Parents answered

SATISFIED	48%
DISSATISFIED	9%
NOT CERTAIN	43%

The high proportion of "not certain" answers to question 11 may indicate that many parents do not expect to influence school practices. It may also be evidence that parents do not know whether their suggestions are implemented.

The small proportion of dissatisfied parents may signify a lack of "grass roots" support for increased involvement of parents in school administration and decision-making. A number of reasons for this might be considered on the basis of comments made by parents.

- Parents are prepared to trust the professional judgement of teachers.
- Parents do not have the command of educational knowledge and terminology necessary for intensive involvement.
- Lack of time prevents parents from becoming deeply involved in school administration.

Schools might investigate the opinions of their own parent groups on this matter. Some clarification of the "not certain" responses could be valuable.

4.7 CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND CITIZENS' GROUPS

Responses to questions 2a and 2b support the observation that most parents are not involved in, or perhaps not terribly concerned about, school decision-making. The Parents and Citizens' Association, and in some schools, school councils or committees, provide legitimate though perhaps limited opportunities for parents to influence school activities. Parents' answers highlight a lack of involvement with these bodies and a lack of certainty about their operation.

Question 2a asks

Have you attended a meeting of the Parents and Citizens' Association, the school council, or school committee?

Responses were

YES	21%
NO	79%

While 21 per cent of parents report attending a meeting in the past year, the proportion who attend regularly is probably much lower. It appears that Parents and Citizens' groups do not represent the parent body as a whole. Many parents lack the time to become involved, but some doubt the effectiveness of Parents and Citizens' groups.

The following comments illustrate the range of views about this form of involvement:

"The way the P. & C. works through a limited executive group militates against broader parent involvement."

"The P. & C. is usually dominated by a few."

"People associated with them usually have ulterior motives, often in conflict with the academic staff."

"An active and interested P. & C. has adequate chance to make suggestions."

"I believe the P. & C. is now an obsolete association."

"Fund raising should not be a function of the P. & C."

The quotes above reflect the critical tone of most of the comments on this topic. Schools might enquire into the opinions of parents concerning the value of Parents and Citizens' groups.

Question 2b asks

Are important matters discussed at these meetings?

Parents replied

YES	21%
NO	5%
?	74

The fact that three quarters of parents do not know whether important matters are discussed at Parents and Citizens' meetings suggests that the Association fails to reach most parents. Furthermore, not all of those who attend meetings consider that important matters are discussed. The cross-tabulation of responses to questions 2a and 2b indicates that parents who attend meetings are more divided than non-attenders in their opinions about the importance of discussions.

Q 2b (Important matters)

		YES	NO	?	
Q 2a (Attended meeting)	YES	74%	15%	11%	100%
	NO	7%	2%	91%	100%

Parents' comments suggest that the responses have the following implications for schools:

- There may be roles other than fund-raising and the provision of voluntary assistance which can be taken on by Parents and Citizens.
- If Parents and Citizens' groups have a worthwhile function, school staffs could explore new ways to provide support and encouragement.
- Some Parents and Citizens' groups need to publicize their activities if they are to adequately represent parents.
- The tendency for the Parents and Citizens' Association to be seen as the preserve of a small, exclusive group of parents needs to be overcome. The establishment of a dominant clique of parents is resented by others.

4.8 USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Questions 5a and 5b enquire into a form of parental involvement which has been promoted by various community groups and local Government bodies in recent years. A common rationale for such involvement has been that school facilities are public property which ought to be used as much as possible.

Use of school facilities may enhance co-operation between staff and parents, or the understanding of school practices by parents. However, it need not do so, any more than the use of the council library gives members an insight into the workings of local government.

A survey of 11 metropolitan secondary schools by the Education Department's Community Use of Schools Committee indicated that "...many community groups are already using a wide range of school facilities for recreational and social activities after school hours" (1976, p.16)[1]. However, the survey did not identify the proportion of local parents who used school facilities. The responses to question 5a provide an estimate of this figure.

Question 5a asks

Have you used facilities at the school out of school time for your own purposes?

Responses were

YES	14%
NO	86%

Fourteen per cent may be an over estimate of the proportion of parents who regularly use school facilities. This figure is likely to include many who attended one or two meetings in school libraries or classrooms out of hours, and perhaps others who used their school's swimming pool or gymnasium on odd occasions.

Parents list a wide range of facilities that they have used, including sporting facilities, resource centres, practical workshops and classrooms.

Some parents express surprise that the schools have facilities available for community use.

Comments include

"What facilities?"

"I believed the school was out of bounds at the end of the week."

"No information has ever been received regarding the out-of-hours use of school facilities."

Apart from lack of knowledge about the availability of facilities, other factors that may have contributed to the substantial "no" response include

- School facilities tend to be available for use by organized groups, not individuals.
- Some local areas have facilities which match any the school could offer, with the advantage of availability during school hours.

[1] Education Department of Western Australia, "Community use of schools survey", mimeo paper, 1976.

- Parents may not be actively encouraged by school principals and staff to use school facilities.

- Urban Australians may not be inclined to make extensive use of public facilities, preferring to use private resources instead.

Question 5b was intended to identify whether parents really want to use school facilities. An indication of the need for schools to increase the availability of facilities might be obtained by examining the magnitude of "yes" responses.

It asks

Would you like to use school facilities more than you have done in the past?

Parents said

YES	28%
NO	47%
?	25%

Proportionately more users than non-users want to increase their use of school facilities. This is indicated in the cross-tabulation below.

Q 5b (Want more use)

Q 5a (Used facilities)	YES	NO	?	
YES	58%	23%	19%	100%
NO	23%	51%	26%	100%

This may indicate, among other things, a lack of awareness by many parents of potential uses of school facilities. It may also be that the communities to which these parents belonged were publicly affluent, with adequate public facilities, or privately affluent, with parents possessing or being able to pay for private recreational resources.

From the school's point of view, community use of facilities entails some costs. Provision must be made for cleaning, caretaking, and insurance. There is likely to be more wear and tear and damage, thought not necessarily deliberate, when the community uses school facilities. However, if the benefits of this form of involvement outweigh the costs, schools might wish to ensure that all parents have information about the availability of facilities.

4.9 OVERALL ATTITUDE TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Question 12 asks

Overall, what is your attitude to the involvement of parents in this school?

Responses were

THEY SHOULD BECOME MORE INVOLVED	42%
THERE IS PRESENTLY TOO MUCH INVOLVEMENT	4%
THE PRESENT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IS SATISFACTORY	54%

Few parents want to retreat from the present situation to a lower level of involvement but a large minority desire greater involvement from parents. Some of the areas in which increased involvement is wanted were identified in responses to other questions (e.g. contact with staff, information from the school, and assistance in and around the school).

Many parents qualified their responses with comments. Although there is quite a range of opinions about parental involvement, the weight of the comments are in favour of staff having almost complete authority over the practices of the school, provided they keep parents informed. Parents seem to be saying that involvement ought to be initiated by staff and ought to serve educational purposes. They are cautious about enlisting the help of parents in the classroom, and appear to have reservations about the influence that parents might exercise over the school's operations. Correspondingly, they emphasise the responsibility of the school to keep parents in touch with general matters and with the progress of their own children.

In contrast to the views expressed in most of the comments, some parents desire the opportunity for more active involvement in school matters. A few propose increased scrutiny of school operations by parents, in a way that might make the staff more directly accountable to the parents in the local area. However, support for this stance appears very limited at present.

The following comments represent a cross-section of parent opinions:

> "It does not necessarily mean that parents are not concerned with what goes on because they are not socially active in school meetings and functions. It is not convenient to spend precious time with school meetings, being a working mother. I speak to my children about what has been going on in school during the day and if I need to, I will ring the school."

"Some should become more involved and others should get out of it."

"As an Aboriginal parent I would like to see more Aboriginal parents encouraged to be active in some form of involvement, e.g. coaching sports. Unfortunately this can only be achieved when parents realize that school is not only an institute of learning but the training ground for tomorrow's men and women."

"My husband and I would like to involve ourselves more but circumstances are against us. Perhaps we could give our opinions on important matters by letter or form such as this."

"I want to see professional people doing a professional job. Advice and extension should be given to the teacher who, in turn, should be able to assist pupils."

"If involvement included educationally valuable duties and not merely those of unpaid labourers in canteens etc., parents may be more inclined to participate and become a part of the school organization."

"The principal must control any greater involvement by parents."

"I am sure teachers will ask for any assistance they require from parents."

"I am extremely satisfied with staff-parent relationships in this school. Every function I have been to over six years has been well attended by parents and staff. Staff have always seemed interested, enthusiastic, and involved."

5.0 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOLS

The tables on the next pages present the responses of parents from each school in the sample. Substantial differences between schools occurred on most questions, 7a, 8a, 9a, 9b and 11 excepted. The first four of these questions attracted consistently low "yes" responses, while in response to question 11, parents from all schools indicated similar levels of satisfaction with their influence.

Differences between schools were anticipated, because different types of schools and communities were chosen deliberately. Schools could be identified as rural or metropolitan, large or small, and established or recently built. School communities differed in terms of socio-economic environment, which includes factors such as public and private affluence, style of homes, level of education, types of occupation, and general life style. Furthermore, there were likely to be organisational and policy differences between schools that would affect the extent of parental involvement.

Although there is no single index of parent involvement, responses to the "a" questions did reflect actual levels of involvement. Certain schools registered consistently high or low "yes" responses to these questions. In addition, the "b" questions focused on the interest of parents in further involvement, or the opinion of parents about the adequacy of existing arrangements.

As the tables show, schools (10) and (16) registered consistently high "yes" responses to most questions. School (10) is a large rural senior high school, while school (16) is a metropolitan senior high school located in a particularly affluent area. Parents from these schools reported relatively high levels of parental involvement and substantial interest in greater involvement.

The two metropolitan schools with least affluent intake areas ((12), (15)) tended to have least parental involvement. Parents from these schools suggested they were less satisfied than parents from other schools with staff contact. Although they tended to show relatively less capacity or interest for further involvement on their own part, a greater proportion of parents from these schools than others responded that "parents should become more involved".

Small samples of parents make comparisons between district high schools inappropriate. However, it might be noted that parents from school (02) claimed unusually high levels of interest and involvement. On the other hand, the low return rate from school (03) may indicate a poor home-school relationship. The principal of this school notes that parents tend to be unco-operative.

SCHOOL CODE		SAMPLE	RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS (IN %)																					
			1a		1b			2a		2b			3a		3b			4a		4b			5a		5b			6a		6b		
			YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?
D.H.S.	01	29	38	62	18	59	22	24	76	15	7	78	10	90	57	14	29	48	52	41	18	41	21	79	29	46	25	35	65	71	18	11
	02	13	62	38	33	50	17	69	31	55	18	27	46	54	73	18	9	31	69	62	8	30	38	62	33	42	25	23	77	83	8	9
	03	2																														
	04	9	33	67	22	67	11	44	56	33	11	56	56	44	67	-	33	56	44	45	22	33	33	67	56	22	22	25	75	75	25	-
	05	13	54	46	39	38	23	23	77	8	-	92	15	85	33	33	33	8	92	42	8	50	15	85	15	54	31	25	75	61	31	8
H.S.	06	121	66	34	45	40	15	23	77	23	8	69	25	75	43	38	19	30	70	38	14	48	21	79	43	38	19	38	62	85	9	6
S.H.S.	07	132	41	59	26	55	19	26	74	25	5	70	34	66	55	27	18	15	85	29	14	57	18	82	35	43	22	47	53	69	15	16
	08	130	42	58	36	50	14	13	87	11	3	86	29	71	58	29	13	20	80	38	12	50	4	96	12	56	32	38	62	68	17	15
	09	122	62	38	34	47	19	16	84	20	2	78	42	58	65	21	14	22	78	32	14	54	16	84	23	54	23	51	59	74	15	11
	10	131	66	34	32	45	23	18	82	27	4	69	43	57	66	17	17	33	67	46	11	43	22	78	31	39	30	41	59	75	13	12
	11	216	42	58	29	51	20	21	79	27	4	69	27	73	49	32	19	34	66	40	13	47	18	82	25	45	30	42	58	73	18	9
	12	217	45	55	21	61	18	12	88	10	4	88	25	75	36	39	25	22	78	24	25	51	7	93	25	50	25	30	70	74	16	10
	13	246	67	33	46	41	13	21	79	23	3	74	18	82	37	41	23	29	71	33	15	52	11	89	25	50	25	40	60	74	17	9
	14	343	53	47	42	43	15	26	74	24	4	72	25	75	40	37	23	32	68	35	12	53	18	82	30	46	24	28	72	72	16	12
	15	108	61	39	28	57	15	6	94	9	3	88	18	82	42	44	14	24	76	30	14	56	4	96	29	53	18	26	74	77	12	11
	16	118	57	43	38	43	19	37	63	30	11	59	44	56	64	23	13	28	72	30	11	59	6	94	36	46	18	42	58	69	25	6

SCHOOL CODE		SAMPLE	RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS (IN %)																				
			7a		7b			8a		8b			9a		9b			10			11			12		
			YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	YES	NO	YES	NO	?	SATIS-FIED	DISSAT-ISFIED	?	SATIS-FIED	DISSAT-ISFIED	?	SHOULD BECOME MORE IN-VOLVED	TOO MUCH INVOLVE-MENT	PRESENT LEVEL SATIS-FACTORY
D.H.S.	01	29	3	97	41	28	31	3	97	61	32	7	-	100	14	68	18	61	28	11	43	14	43	52	8	40
	02	13	15	85	50	42	8	15	85	85	15	-	17	83	25	58	17	69	15	16	27	18	55	42	-	58
	03	2																								
	04	9	33	67	45	33	22	33	67	63	12	25	22	78	11	89	-	78	11	11	56	22	22	33	11	56
	05	13	-	100	31	23	46	-	100	54	31	15	-	100	8	85	7	61	8	31	33	-	67	25	25	50
H.S.	06	121	3	97	46	33	21	7	93	53	27	20	7	93	15	66	19	79	13	8	46	13	41	43	6	51
S.H.S.	07	132	5	95	38	46	16	5	95	59	21	20	3	97	19	57	24	78	9	13	44	6	50	34	4	62
	08	130	5	95	46	32	22	2	98	62	26	12	2	98	14	68	18	77	11	12	49	9	42	43	4	53
	09	122	6	94	48	28	24	6	94	59	26	15	1	99	18	65	17	66	16	18	50	6	44	40	3	57
	10	131	4	96	38	33	28	8	92	62	19	19	3	97	16	60	24	74	13	13	50	9	41	42	4	54
	11	216	6	94	52	28	20	10	90	61	24	15	4	96	14	68	18	78	8	14	49	10	41	39	4	57
	12	217	3	97	36	36	28	9	91	60	25	15	3	97	18	60	22	58	21	21	41	12	47	50	3	47
	13	246	4	96	39	37	24	8	92	67	21	12	5	95	12	65	23	69	14	17	53	9	38	38	4	58
	14	343	4	96	42	32	26	8	92	64	21	15	3	97	15	66	19	69	15	16	52	7	41	41	4	55
	15	108	1	99	42	33	25	3	97	74	15	11	1	99	14	60	26	69	17	14	42	5	53	53	4	43
	16	118	3	97	55	27	18	11	89	70	16	14	4	96	20	64	16	76	14	10	53	6	41	42	1	57

City and country schools differ particularly in the extent to which parents help around the school, and express a willingness to do so. With the exception of the affluent school (16), city parents were less able or willing to help than country parents. It may be that discrete rural townships foster a greater sense of community than is possible in a suburban environment.

The trend is reversed, though less markedly, with respect to invitations to meet staff. More than half the parents from five of the six metropolitan high schools reported receiving an invitation to meet staff, but only in two of the five larger country schools did this occur.

Differences between schools undoubtedly raise more questions than can be answered here. The exploratory nature of this study suggests caution in generalizing to other schools or other facets of parental involvement.

However, it does seem that social class of parents is associated with differences between schools. This relationship may imply that staffs of schools in less affluent areas should make additional efforts to keep parents in touch with school matters and to make parents feel welcome in the school. Informal ways of relating to parents may be required so that the process of schooling is more easily comprehended. Staff must also resolve the problems of involving parents who might have two jobs, financial or domestic worries, limited fluency in English, or little experience in schools.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are offered:

6.1 Few parents are dissatisfied with the general extent and nature of their involvement with secondary schools. However, there are some areas in which parents would like to see improvements. Most important among these is communication between the school and home, particularly concerning school courses and student progress.

Parents tend to regard staff as being responsible for initiating contact and keeping a steady flow of information about the school and child directed at the home. While many parents can visit the school and attend meetings, some are unable to do so because of their occupational circumstances or their distance from the school. Others feel inhibited because of lack of schooling or limited command of English.

There is evidence to suggest that many parents would appreciate more frequent progress reports about their children. They also indicate that they would like outlines of the school's programmes in particular subjects.

6.2 The parents' part in relationships with the secondary school tends to be passive. A minority of parents contact staff, attend meetings, help around the school, or influence decision-making. Parents suggest that there is scope for greater active involvement, but little dissatisfaction with the present situation is evident.

In particular, the majority of parents are not demanding greater involvement in school decision-making. Parents and Citizens' meetings represent one means by which parents can influence some aspects of the school, but attendance at these meetings tends to be low. Despite this, parents claim they are satisfied with the notice that school staff take of their views.

Control of school expenditure concerns few parents. Less than a fifth of parents want more influence over school spending, and the majority of these already attend Parents and Citizens' meetings.

Opinion tends to be divided on the issue of parent assistance within the school. Almost half the parents indicate a willingness to work in an auxiliary capacity around the school, and a slightly smaller group approve of parents and others helping in classrooms. Less

than a third of parents are unable or unwilling to assist the school, or disagree with non-professional help in the classroom. However, some of these appear to hold very strong views about the role of the parent relative to the school.

6.3 Levels of parental involvement appear to be related to the social class of parents. Schools serving less affluent metropolitan areas attract less active involvement from parents, compared with schools in more affluent districts. Parents in these schools may have less leisure time, less knowledge of schools, and less confidence in approaching the school than parents from other areas. However, parents in these schools indicate that they would welcome more communication from staff.

6.4 Country high schools register higher levels of active parental involvement than city schools. Rural parents indicate greater willingness to help around the school, and to make contact with staff generally.

6.5 Although school facilities are used extensively by community groups, less than one sixth of parents claim to have been involved in this way. Furthermore, only a quarter of parents want to make greater use of school facilities themselves.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS: OVERALL RESULTS.

SECONDARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE/RESEARCH BRANCH

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

TOTAL RESPONSE: 1960 families, 16 secondary schools

RATE OF RETURN: $^{1960}/_{2785}$ = 70.5%

(Based on August 1977 enrolments)

Instructions

1. The questions refer to the present year.

2. Either parent may answer the questionnaire. Please answer for yourself and your spouse.

3. If you have more than one child at the school, please answer with reference to the child who brought the questionnaire home.

   Please indicate whether this child is in:

Years 8-10	83%
Years 11-12	17%

4. Please make any comments that you think might be helpful.

RESULTS FOR ALL SCHOOLS IN SAMPLE

1. (a) Have you been invited to meet a staff member in order to talk about your child's progress?

YES	NO
54%	46%

(b) Do you have enough meetings with staff members to talk about your child's progress?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
35%	48%	17%

2. (a) Have you attended a meeting of the Parents and Citizens, the school council, or a school committee?

YES	NO
21%	79%

(b) Are important school matters discussed at these meetings?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
21%	5%	74%

3. (a) Have you helped around the school in some way (e.g. in library, canteen, "busy bee", coaching sport, etc.)?

YES	NO
28%	72%

(b) Would you be prepared to give help of this kind?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
48%	32%	20%

4. (a) Have you contacted a staff member in order to give information that would be helpful in teaching your child?

YES	NO
28%	72%

(b) Do staff members like you to contact them to give them information that could be helpful in teaching your child?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
34%	15%	51%

5. (a) Have you used facilities at the school out of school time for your own purposes?

YES	NO
14%	86%

(b) Would you like to use school facilities more than you have done in the past?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
28%	47%	25%

6. (a) Have you received information from the school explaining some aspect of a subject being studied by your child?

YES	NO
37%	63%

(b) Do you want to know more about the subjects being studied by your child?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
73%	16%	11%

7. (a) Have you helped supervise a group of students, helped a teacher with a lesson, or demonstrated some activity to students in the school?

YES	NO
4%	96%

(b) Do you think that parents and other members of the community should give more assistance of this kind to teachers?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
43%	33%	24%

8. (a) Have you made a suggestion to member(s) of the school staff on how to improve some aspect of the school?

YES	NO
7%	93%

(b) Do you think parents should contact the school if they have an idea on how the school could be better run or their child better taught?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
63%	22%	15%

9. (a) Have you made a suggestion to the school on how it should spend some of its funds?

YES	NO
3%	97%

(b) Would you like to have more say about the way the school spends its funds?

YES	NO	UNDECIDED
16%	64%	20%

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the school has kept you informed about important matters?

SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NOT CERTAIN
71%	14%	15%

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the notice that school staff take of your views about school matters?

SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NOT CERTAIN
48%	9%	43%

12. Overall, what is your attitude to the involvement of parents in this school?

They should become more involved	42%
There is presently too much involvement	4%
The present level of involvement is satisfactory	54%

If you wish, please add any other comment.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

75820/5/78–1,900–L/2774 WILLIAM C BROWN, Government Printer, Western Australia